

BIBLE DOCTRINE
OF

Devotion

BOWMAN

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The Bible Doctrine of Devotion

BY
EDWARD S. BOWMAN, A.M.



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To One
WHOSE CONSTANT DEVOTION BRIGHTENS
AND SWEETENS EVERY TASK
WHOSE DEVOUT LIFE IS A BLESSED INSPIRATION
By Faithful Wife
THIS LITTLE BOOK IS TENDERLY DEDICATED
BY
THE AUTHOR

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Introduction

THIS little book is written by request. It is for Christians, and seeks to emphasize the scriptural teaching of devotion. By devotion, we mean the right attitude of the whole life toward God. To those who have put the cross between themselves and their sins and are now living on the Godward side of the cross, it aims, by calling attention to a number of passages of scripture, to lengthen, broaden, heighten, and deepen the spiritual life. Its claim is not that of unfolding doctrine, but inspiring devotion—the devotion of the whole life to Him whose we are and whom we serve.

The author once heard, on the same day, two distinguished, representative men. After hearing them, he asked himself the question, What have they inspired in me? After hearing the first, he said, "I want to be a better preacher." After hearing the other, he said, "I want to be a better Christian."

Introduction

Other books may inspire other things, but it is the earnest prayer of the author that this little volume may inspire all who read it to say, "*I want to be a better Christian.*" May God grant that it may be a blessing.

EDWARD S. BOWMAN.

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1904.

“I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.”—*Jesus.*

“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”—*The Father.*

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I

Jesus' Devotion to the Father

“Such was thy truth, and such thy zeal,
Such deference to thy Father's will ;
Such love and meekness so divine
I would transcribe and make them mine.”

ONE cannot be a careful reader of the Gospels without being impressed with the perfect devotion of the Son to the Father. In all his speaking to his Father or about him, he never uses a name which denotes his “creative power or omnipotent dignity.” In his most solemn and priestly prayer he addresses God, not as the “One that inhabiteth the universe,” or the “Infinite and Eternal One,” but, “O Righteous Father,” “O Holy Father.”

“The word ‘Father,’” says one, “which Jesus uses in speaking to or of God, is the final and most perfect name

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which has come to us from the revelation of the Old and New Testaments. Every other thought of God expressed in title or name is contained within this final word, 'Father.' Let us never imagine that God, in endeavoring to teach us a truth concerning himself, has borrowed one of our names. It has too often been said that God bent over us and took out of our life the great word 'Father,' that he might teach us something of what he is. The essential truth is that God is *the* Father, not *a* father; not one born of our poor human realizations of fatherhood, but the one who is revealing to us what a father should be." Jesus has given to us the best and highest revelation of God, in that he has revealed through his perfect sonship the Father. Man has discovered in God infinite wisdom and power, but the *love* of the Father, which is back of all else, is more precious than either; this the Son has revealed, who came from the heart of the Father. "No man hath seen God at any

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time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18).

Jesus has given us, in himself, not only the example of a life in its relation with men,—teaching us how to live before the world,—but he has given us the example of a life in relation to the Father. His was a life of perfect devotion, unswerving loyalty, and absolute obedience.

THE FATHER'S TESTIMONY.

The Gospels record only a few times when the Father speaks audibly from the heavens. Each time it is the approval of the Father testifying to the devotion of the Son. The first is on the occasion of his baptism. Jesus seeks baptism from John, but John, recognizing his superior, refuses him, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee." At the Master's further request, John administers the sacrament. Immediately there follow two supernatural indications that Jesus in his moral

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nature needed no such rites: the one is the descending upon him of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, the other is the voice of the Father speaking from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). What this voice may have meant to the others who may have heard it, we do not know; but to John it was a message of tremendous importance, modifying his mission and revealing the Messiah. To Jesus it was the familiar voice of the Father, attesting his devotion.

The voice again is heard approvingly. It is on the Mount of Transfiguration. A cloud overshadows the disciples and the Father speaks of the Son, saying, "This is my beloved Son: hear ye him" (Mark 9:7, R. V.). The Father makes the devoted Son the authoritative teacher—"hear ye him." He comes to both teach and enable them to do the will of God.

Again, Jesus is speaking of his demise. Devotedly turning his face heav-

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enward and addressing the Father, he says: "Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again" (John 12:28). The people who stood by heard the voice, but thought it thundered. To Jesus it was the familiar voice of the Father. Dear reader, are you so devoted to him that when he speaks you recognize his voice?

The Father further testifies to the devotion of the Son in that he sent him into the world to accomplish the greatest work ever undertaken by God—the redemption of the world. His *mission*, therefore, was a greater attestation of his devotion than the utterance of the voice either on the occasion of his baptism or his transfiguration.

THE TESTIMONY OF OTHERS.

Those among whom Jesus lived, and for whom he labored, testify to his never-tiring and loyal devotion to his

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Father. They at once recognize in him a power which is more than natural. By his wonderful words and works they place him at once above all other men and account for it only through his perfect access to God. After announcing the principles of the kingdom he came to establish, recorded in the Sermon on the Mount, "the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matthew 7: 28, 29). When Jesus gave the invitation and promise on the great day of the feast (John 7:37), many of the people said, "Of a truth this is the Prophet." Still others said, "This is the Christ." At once they associate him with God.

Those who were not jealous of him recognized his true relation to the Father. One of the Jews, a Pharisee, a ruler, a teacher in Israel, came to him and said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou

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doest, except God be with him" (John 3:2).

The disciples who were intimately associated with him in his life and ministry, observing his devotion to the Father, are not silent. Upon one occasion Jesus said to them, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" They told him that some say John the Baptist, Isaiah, or Jeremiah. But when he said, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

When we desire instruction, we would have it at the hand of one who is a master in the thing itself. The disciples had heard Jesus pray to the Father; better still, had seen his prayer-life. They saw how devoted he was and that to every request there came the answer, so they came to him and said, "Lord, teach us to pray."

The multitude of curious people were trying, in one way and another, to account for the strange manifestations on the day of Pentecost. After they

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had said it was due to one thing, and then another, Peter arose and told them that this which they both saw and heard was due to the exaltation of Jesus at the right hand of the Father; which the Father did because of the unfailing obedience of the Son to the will of God.

THE CLAIM OF JESUS.

The key-note of Jesus' life was sounded by himself when he said, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). That to which Jesus constantly laid claim while upon earth was his doing the will of the Father. When he prayed he always conditioned it upon his Father's will. When requested by his disciples to eat after a weary journey, he said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me" (John 4:34). Long ages before his birth the prophet said of him, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." The will of God is supreme, and he would

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have all render absolute obedience to it. "In heaven the angels find their highest blessedness in doing God's will. For this man was created with a free will, in order that he might have the power to choose, and of his own accord do the will of God. Deceived by the devil, man committed the great sin of rather doing his own will than God's will. Jesus became man to bring us back to the blessedness of doing the will of God."

During his whole life upon the earth, Jesus never lost sight of the fact that he was here, sent of the Father to fulfill the *Father's* mission. In all he said or did he never laid claim to his independence. So devoted was he to the Father that he would not even lay claim to his own teaching or the words he spoke. He performed untold miracles, and the multitudes followed to see him manifest his power. The lawyers and doctors were confounded by his wisdom, and the people astonished at his wonderful works, yet he would

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say, "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him" (John 8:28, 29). In all he said and did he continually laid claim to his devotion to the Father, using repeatedly the expression, "The Father hath sent me." It will repay you to see how frequently he used this expression, as he spoke about his mission, ever striving to make the people see that he did not act independently, but always on behalf of the Father, to whom his life was most loyally devoted. (John 5:24, 30, 37, 38; 6:38, 39, 40, 44; 7:16, 28, 29, 33; 8:16, 18, 26, 29, 42; 9:4; 11:42; 12:44, 45, 49; 13:20; 14:24; 15:21; 17:8, 18, 21, 23, 25; 20:21.)

Not only did Jesus claim that he was sent of God, and that he always did his will, but he claimed such devotion that he could say that he and the Father were *one*. In his priestly prayer (John

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17) he repeatedly addressed the Father in claims of oneness with him.

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS' LIFE.

The attitude of Jesus' life was a continuous testimony of his devotion to the Father. Find him where you will and he is in the perfect will of God. Nothing turns him aside from it, no, not even death itself. How significant of his devotion to the Father are his first and last recorded words, before his death: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49). "It is finished" (John 19:30). From first to last his life is in perfect harmony with the key-note—"I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." He is always conscious of the nearness of the Father, and accustomed to speaking to him as to one of his disciples standing by.

Robert E. Speer, in his book, "The Man Christ Jesus," writing of His prayerfulness, says: "In all the exi-

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gencies of his life he turned to the strength of prayer's fellowship instinctively. The great events of his life were preceded by prayer; such miracles as his walking on the sea and stilling the tempest (Matthew 14:23-35), feeding the four thousand (Matthew 15:36), healing the lunatic boy (Mark 9:14-29), raising Lazarus (John 11:41, 42), feeding the five thousand (John 6:11); such outgoings of power as his upholding Peter upon the sea, and the healing of multitudes at Gennesaret (Matthew 14:23, 31-36). The people connected his prayers with helpful influences, and brought little children to him, "that he should lay his hands on them and pray" (Matthew 19:13, R. V.). The choice of the Twelve and the Sermon on the Mount were preceded by a night of prayer (Luke 6:12, 13), and Peter's great confession was made after the disciples had seen Jesus engaged in prayer alone (Luke 9:18, 20). The transfiguration

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was a phenomenon of prayer (Luke 9: 28-36)."

Jesus not only preceded the great events of his life with prayer, but he followed them as well with communion with his Father. He lived continually beneath the shadow of the cross, and when the time came for him to be offered up, he did not turn aside, but "stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51). He would not let even death separate him from the Father, for before expiring he said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46).

What could be the aim of a life of such wonderful devotion to God? Was it for fame or praise he lived?

Nay, for me he lived,
For me his blood was spilt.

Let his life teach us like devotion to the Father and loving sacrifice for others.

"And now what more shall I say? Do I need here
To draw the lesson of this life, or say
More than these few words?
The vine from every living limb bleeds wine;

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Is it the poorer for that spirit shed?
The drunkard and the wanton drink thereof,
Are they the richer for that gift's excess?
Measure thy life by loss instead of gain;
Not by the wine drunk, but the wine poured forth;
For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice,
And whoso suffers most hath most to give."

**Hindrances to
the Devotional Life**

“One look at that pale, suffering face
Will make us feel the deep disgrace
 Of weakness.
We shall be sifted till the strength
Of self-conceit be changed at length
 To meekness.

“Wounds of the soul, though healed, will ache ;
The reddening scars remain, and make
 Confession ;
Lost innocence returns no more ;
We are not what we were before
 Transgression.

“But noble souls, through dust and heat,
Rise from disaster and defeat
 The stronger,
And, conscious still of the divine
Within them, lie on earth supine
 No longer.”

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II

Hindrances to the Devotional Life

“We rise by the things that are under our feet ;
By what we have mastered of good or gain ;
By the pride deposed, and the passion slain,
And the vanquished ills that we hourly meet.”

THE Word of God is full of precious promises, which, in the lives of many Christians, are never realized. It speaks of God keeping the believer in perfect peace. It promises a power to enable him to overcome the world. It assures him that his life may be made one of joy unspeakable. It offers him an unerring guide. It promises a friend and companion more faithful than a brother.

John MacNeil, in “The Spirit-Filled Life,” says: “On every hand a lack of something is being felt and expressed by God’s people. Their Christian experience is not what they expected it

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would be. Instead of expected victory, it is oft-recurring, dreaded defeat; instead of soul satisfaction, it is soul hunger; instead of deep, abiding heart-rest, it is disquiet and discontent; instead of advancing, it is losing ground. Is this all Christ meant when he said, 'Come unto me'? Is this life of constant disappointment the normal life of the Bible Christian? To these sad questionings the divine Word answers with an emphatic 'No,' and the testimony of an ever-increasing number of God's children answers, 'No.'"

Many Christians are like the children of Israel on their way to Canaan; stopping short of the land of promise, they said the promise could never be realized. "Yea, they despised the pleasant land; they believed not his word; but murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord" (Psalm 106:24, 25). Every Christian has known or heard of those in whom God has wrought mightily, both in the pulling down of the strong-

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holds of Satan, and a life of peace hid with Christ in God; yet many must confess that there have been no tides of joy flowing like a river through their famishing souls, or waves of spiritual power for the combatting of sin within or without. Where is the trouble? It surely cannot be with God or his Word, for he is not slack concerning his promises, for his word is yea and amen to those who believe. If there is disappointment and failure, it is with man, for God is willing to do for any one to-day what he did for Otterbein or Finney or Edwards or Paul. If the fault lies on the human side, what is it? Shall we not search for it, and by God's help find it, and put it away? God is wonderfully solicitous that our lives should be intensely devotional, that we may get the most from him, and that he may do the most through us.

In entering upon this study of the things which hinder the devotional life, can all say with David, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and

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know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23, 24)? After the divine search-light is turned on, and the thing which hinders is revealed, can we say, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalm 51:7)?

Present known sin in the life of the believer hinders the devotional life. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness" (Isaiah 59:1-3). The children of Israel realized that the Lord was not doing many mighty works in and through them, and they were seeking to know the cause. He told them that his hand was

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not shortened that he could not save, and that his ear was not heavy that he could not hear. He said, "Don't look to me for the cause, don't blame me for the trouble; the fault is not with me; look to yourselves." He says to those who would charge the fault to him: "*Your iniquities* have separated between you and me; *your sins* have hid my face from you, that I will not hear; *your hands* are defiled with blood; *your fingers* with iniquity; *your lips* have spoken lies; *your tongues* have muttered *perverseness*." What a charge! When God shows us our sins let us "own up." Do not answer back as did the people to whom Malachi wrote. God charged them with most serious offenses, and they denied every one of them. He said, "Your priests have despised my name"; and they said, "*Wherein* have we despised thy name?" He said, "Ye offered polluted bread upon mine altar"; and they said, "*Wherein* have we polluted thee?" He said, "Ye have wearied the Lord with

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your words"; and they said, "*Wherein* have we wearied him?" He said, "Ye have robbed me"; and they said, "*Wherein* have we robbed thee?" He said, "Your words have been stout against me"; and they said, "*Wherein* have we spoken against thee?"

Many lives are hindered from advancement and strength in true devotion by the sins they are not willing to give up. Doctor Torrey, in one of his stirring addresses, said: "How many men and women of ability and promise there are in the church of whom we expect great things, but they always disappoint us. They never go on. They are forever coming up to a certain point, but there they stop. The work of God in their souls that you expected is not wrought. What is the matter? Sin, *sin*, SIN. Oh, if you would have a mighty work of God in your own soul, search your heart to-day; and if God shows you some sin, give it up, no matter if it is like tearing out your heart-

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strings. It hinders a mighty work of God in your soul."

Another of the hindrances to the devotional life is unconfessed sin. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). There may be in the life sins committed long ago, and because you have nearly forgotten them, you are led to think that God has forgotten; but he has not. You have been trying to cover it over and over with forgetfulness, but remember it cannot be hid from the eye that never sleeps. Go make confession first to God, for it may be that to him alone you need to confess. If you have wronged your fellow-man,—taking advantage of him in some business transaction, or told a lie that has worked his ruin, or circulated a slanderous report which has damaged his character,—go to him and make an honest confession. If your sin was of a public character, then public confession should be made. Your life can

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never be truly happy and filled with power until the sin which hinders is confessed. Man may not forgive you, but if you are sincere, and have done your best in making restitution, God will.

“Next in merit to not sinning is confessing sin. The three hardest words in the English language are, ‘I was mistaken.’ Frederick the Great wrote to the senate, ‘I have just lost a great battle, and it was entirely my own fault.’ Goldsmith said, ‘This confession displayed more greatness than all his victories.’ Bacon said, ‘I do plainly and ingenuously confess that I am guilty of corruption, and so renounce all defense. I beseech your lordship to be merciful to a broken reed.’”

Giving preëminence to the self-life hinders the devotional life. “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). God always wants to do more for us than we believe. We want God’s power in our

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lives, but we want it our way instead of his way. Like Jacob, wanting to overcome the angel, while the angel wanted to overcome him. In the average Christian there is a constant conflict being waged between the flesh and the Spirit, and too often we give our influence on the side of the flesh because it is constantly clamoring for gratification, and its gratification is often pleasant. But to the one who will yield to the Spirit, and deny the flesh, keep it in subjection, yea, even mortify it, there will be no condemnation. "To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6).

Paul, writing to the Corinthian Christians, speaks of their carnality hindering their spiritual development. "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

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For ye are yet carnal" (I. Corinthians 3:1-3). The carnal state is a state of prolonged infancy. A babe nourished on milk at one year is perfectly proper, but a babe at twenty years nourished on milk is a calamity. Such were the Christians (spiritually) at Corinth. How is it with you?

The carnal state is also a state which incapacitates the soul for spiritual truth and exercise. Instead of being themselves teachers, they have need of some one teaching them. (Hebrews 5:12-14.) The carnal state is also a state of failure. There is little victory over sin. We may be set on making our life holy, and our life victorious, but if we are under the dominion of the flesh-life there can be no glorious victory. "Do we not find Christians who in some respects have a good measure of the grace of God, and yet have never really conquered their temper, and so when another says a sharp thing to them they give a sharp reply? How many Christians there are who have

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never learned to love as God wants them to love, to love the unlovable? What is this but that they are yet in the carnal state? In them the flesh has more power than the Spirit."

Jesus once sat at a well and there came a woman to draw water. When he asked her for a drink, she thought it strange that he being a Jew should ask drink from a woman of Samaria. He told her if she knew who was speaking she would have asked drink of him, and he would have given her living water. He showed her that the water she had was unsatisfying and she would thirst again and have to come hither to draw; and that he had water to give which if she drank she would never thirst again, neither come hither to draw; but that the water he would give would be in her a well of living water, springing up continually. As soon as she learned this she said, eagerly, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw" (John 4:15). Jesus said,

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“Wait; before you can receive this water, there is something in your life that must be made right. ‘Go, call thy husband.’” So with the child of God who would live a truly devout life. Before he can have the best gifts Heaven can bestow, he must be prepared to receive them.

Dear reader, is present actual sinning in the way? Then stop it. Is there some unconfessed sin you have been covering? Then confess and forsake it. Is there a continual seeking to gratify the carnal life and living under the dominion of *self*? Then deny thyself, and take up thy cross and follow Jesus.

Fellowship with God

“I would converse with thee from day to day,
With heart intent on what thou hast to say,
And through my pilgrim-walk, whate'er befall,
Consult with thee, O Lord, about it all.
Since thou art willing thus to condescend
To be my intimate, familiar friend,
Oh, let me to the great occasion rise,
And count thy friendship life's most glorious
prize.”

Fellowship with God

III

Fellowship with God

“Just to listen and to stay
Where you cannot miss His voice.
This is all; and thus to-day,
Communing, you shall rejoice.”

IN saving a soul from the guilt of sin, God does not abandon it to live as best it can the life he requires. We are given the power whereby we may live the truly devout life, as truly as we have been ransomed from the guilt of sin. (Romans 5:10.) The redeemed soul has been brought into the most blessed relations with Christ and the Father. We are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens. (Ephesians 2:19; I. John 3:1; Romans 8:14-17.) As redeemed sons and daughters of God, we are taken into partnership with him. (I. Corinthians 3:9.) Such privileges and relationships re-

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quire that we be in the closest communion and fellowship with him.

PRAYER.

“Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed ;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

“Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near.

“Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try ;
Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.

“Prayer is the Christian’s vital breath,
The Christian’s native air ;
His watchword at the gates of death ;
He enters heaven with prayer.”

We must ever remember that prayer rises far above the mere reciting of words. The rhetorical form may be ever so beautiful, and the thing desired requested in the most fitting petition, but if our soul does not breathe through it, it is not *prayer*. “God does not listen for words; he wants to hear me.” Prayer is the breathing Godward our desires. We may be helped to a proper understanding of what

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prayer is from some who have not only written about it, but who have had experience in the thing itself :

“Prayer is an acknowledgment of our dependence upon God and his all-sufficiency to supply our needs. Prayer, in its very nature, is an expression of want and an earnest desire for help. God only is independent; man is dependent in the broadest sense. Prayer, therefore, is the weak looking to the strong for strength; it is the ignorant looking to the wise for wisdom.”—*Weaver*.

“Prayer pulls the rope below and the great bell rings above in the ears of God. Some scarcely stir the bell, for they pray so languidly; others give an occasional pluck at the rope; but he who wins with Heaven is the man who grasps the rope boldly, and pulls continuously, with all his might.”—*Spurgeon*.

“The spiritual life with its growth depends in great measure on *prayer*. According as I pray much or little,

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pray with pleasure or as a duty, pray according to the Word of God or my own inclinations, will my life flourish or decay.”—*Murray*.

“Prayer is the lifting up of the heart to God; all words of prayer without this are mere hypocrisy.”—*Wesley*.

“Prayer willingly flyeth incessant
Twixt the earth and the sky, the carrier-pigeon of
heaven.” —*Bishop Tegner*.

Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler says: “The last hour I spent with my beloved friend Spurgeon was spent at family worship. After I had concluded my prayer, he chimed in with a most wonderfully simple, fervent, artless converse with God; it was like the reverent talk of a child with the best of fathers. After I heard that marvelous prayer, I said to myself, ‘Now I know the secret hiding-place of Spurgeon’s power.’”

Were we to consider what has been wrought by the prayers of believing saints, there would be no end of writing. The divine Word is full of prayers and accounts of what they have

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wrought. Volumes have been written enumerating some of the wonderful works of grace, the marvelous cures of many sick, and the maintenance of charitable institutions, wrought in answer to prayer.

What does the Word of God say concerning this phase of our devotional life? First of all, we have the example of Jesus. (Mark 1:35.) Again we see him sending the multitudes away that he might go apart awhile and pray. Would you have power with God, then study Christ's prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John, and pray in the spirit of resignation, as he prayed. Do you ask the Great Teacher himself to teach you to pray? I fear that too often we read *books* that we may know how to pray, instead of asking *Him* to whom the apostles spoke when they said, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

"O thou by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way!
The path of prayer thyself hath trod;
Lord, teach us how to pray."

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Our Master has made praying as simple as it is possible to be made. He said, "Ask," "seek," "knock," and gave us promise of fulfillment. (Matthew 7: 7, 8.) He has further given us instruction in that he said, "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6: 6). In this he has suggested (as some one has said) the period, place, privacy, persons, and promise in prayer: "Period for prayer—'when thou prayest.' Place for prayer—'enter into thy closet.' Privacy of prayer—'shut thy door.' Persons in prayer—'pray to thy Father.' Promise for prayer—'he shall reward thee.'"

Jesus has instructed us as well how *not* to pray, as how to pray. (Matthew 6: 7.) Let us live in the atmosphere of prayer continually, for we are taught that "men ought always to pray."

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Some who will read these lines are fathers. Can your children say of you what the great missionary, John G. Paton, said of his father? "If there is any blessing in my life, it is due to my father. Three times a day we passed the little closet where my father was before God. We went on tiptoe, lest we should disturb him. We knew that the high priest of the family was standing in the holy of holies." Lord, teach us such devotion to thee as that.

ALONE WITH GOD.

This is such a busy age that we scarcely take time to think. When Frances R. Havergal was asked why the church did not accomplish more, she replied, "It is because Christians do not spend enough time alone with God." A prize was once offered to the individual who would rule the largest number of microscopic lines in the space of an inch. Many tried for the prize, but the successful contestant was one who took his work and went alone

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in the solitude of a mountain, where, away from the noise and the confusion of the busy world, he could give his time to the work in hand with nothing to distract. Might we not be able to rule some of the finer and more delicate lines in our Christian character if we spent more time alone with God?

“Take time to be holy; speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in him always, and feed on his Word.”

Let us learn some biblical lessons on devotion from some who have been alone with God.

Alone with God, Moses gets God's plan for his life. (Exodus 3:1-14.) Moses had for forty years tried life in Egypt, largely in the court of Pharaoh. Then he tried the life of a shepherd. Still this was not God's plan for him. One day an ordinary bush by the way-side was all aglow, and he said, “I will turn aside and see what this strange sight is.” God was in it, and spake to him out of the bush and gave him his plan for his life. Oh, if we were not so busy and would turn aside more to be

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alone with God, we, like Moses, might hear him give to us some great commission, or change for our blessing and his glory the plan of our life. Dear young reader, are you anxious what shall be your calling, or to what you shall give your life? Do not choose anything until you have gone alone often with God and asked him about it. You may feel like Moses and say, "Lord, who am I that I should do this? I am not able." But if he has marked out your path, he will say to you, as he said to Moses, "I will go with thee."

Alone with God, Abraham is tested. (Genesis 12: 1-12.) On Mount Moriah God proves him. Up until God asked him to sacrifice Isaac, his life had been one of successive separations. He was called upon to leave Ur, then Haran, then Egypt, and next Lot. Was not this sufficient? Why must he separate himself from Isaac in this cruel way? The rest he could understand; this was mysterious. How could God fulfill his promise if Isaac were slain? But,

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thought he, why do I reason thus? God has commanded; I must obey. He prepares for the journey to Mount Moriah. The servants and asses are left at the foot of the mount. Abraham, with his treasure, ascended the mountain to be alone with God. The altar is made, the wood is placed, and the son is put upon it. The hand holding the knife is raised; then God says, "It is enough, Abraham." He stood the test. Nothing, not even his only son, could stand between him and his obedience to God.

"The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne
And worship only thee."

God wants the first place in our lives, and therefore would have us willing to yield up anything for him. Does God call you to a life of separation, go alone and ask him to help you to yield.

Alone with God, Jacob is prepared to meet his angry brother. (Genesis 32:22-30.) Jacob and his brother

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Esau became estranged, and the former had to leave the country. After years of absence, he returns with his family and cattle. His brother learning of it gathers together four hundred men, and goes to meet him, not on the most friendly terms. Something must be done. Jacob is not able in his own strength to meet his angry brother and prevail over him. He sends his family and all he has over the brook and spends the night alone with the angel of God. The night is one of struggling. Jacob, wanting strength with which to meet his brother, seeks to prevail over the angel. At last the dawn approaches, and the angel must go, so he cripples Jacob. Jacob, however, obtains the blessing—not as many a preacher has mistakenly preached, and many a worker has advised a seeking soul at the altar of prayer, by wrestling and overcoming, but by confessing and yielding. The angel asked him his name, and he said, “Jacob,” which means a cheat, a supplanter. This he

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was, and before he could obtain the blessing he must confess to God. This he did in humility and weeping. (Hosea 12:4.) Now his name is changed and he is made a prince. Now he has power. Now he can meet Esau. O child of God, are you contending with your Master? know that by so doing you will obtain nothing. The only way to *prevail* with God is to *submit* to him. God wants to gain the victory over us only that he may hand it back to us in power for service.

How did the brothers meet the next day? Not in battle, as they expected. "And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept" (Genesis 33:4). All praise to His name, for while Jacob was alone with God seeking preparation to meet his angry brother, God was preparing Esau's heart for the meeting, also.

A friend of mine had been having trouble in getting along with his tenant on his farm, and there had been un-

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kind words spoken on both sides. The time came when the landlord must give the tenant notice to vacate. He dreaded the ordeal, for he knew the spirit of the man. I advised him to spend some time alone with God about it, as Jacob did. He did so, and, strange to say,—no, not strange, for it is the way God always helps when we go alone to him,—the transaction of the next day had in it nothing of unpleasantness whatever.

Alone with God we find comfort and encouragement when discouraged and disheartened. In I. Kings 19:1-14, 'Ahab the king told Jezebel what Elijah had done, and she threatened his life, and he fled a day's journey into the wilderness, and there, lying down under a juniper-tree, he asked God to let him die. Weary, worn, and disheartened, he thought death was the best thing God could give him; but God knew what was best; so he gave him a good night's sleep and a refreshing breakfast, in the strength of which he

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went a forty days' and nights' journey to Horeb, the mount of God, where he lodged in a cave. "And the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away" (I. Kings 19: 9, 10). The Lord placed him on the mountain and then he passed by in a great, destroying wind, and in an earthquake, and in a fire, and showed Elijah *his* power. When Elijah stood at the entrance to the cave, the Lord said to him, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" And he said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." Where-

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upon the Lord said to him, "Elijah, don't be so discouraged, for your work is not nearly completed. You are to anoint Hazael to be king over Syria, and Jehu to be king over Israel, and Elisha thou shalt anoint to be prophet in thy stead. And then do not think you are the only one I have left, for 'I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him'" (I. Kings 19:18). So the old prophet set about the work of the Lord and took on a new lease of life. Dear reader, are you ever discouraged and disheartened? do you ever get a spell of "the blues"? Then get alone with God and talk it over with him.

"A little talk with Jesus
Makes it right, all right."

Or, are you, a member of the church, somewhat inclined to taking a pessimistic view of things? Instead of complaining and sighing for the "good old times,"

"Take it to the Lord in prayer."

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At last the Lord sees that Elijah's work on earth is done, and so he says to him, "Elijah, you remember that request you made of me under the juniper-tree." He answers, "Yes, Lord, that I might die." "Well, Elijah, it shall never be granted; I have something better for you [how he always exceeds our requests]. Get ready, for soon my chariots and horsemen will be along." The old prophet prepares for the translation, and after a while they come and he steps in and off they go in a whirlwind. As they near the celestial city they hear music and the pearly gates swing ajar and a band of angels come to welcome them. Then methinks I hear, as some one has said, the old prophet of God say to the horsemen, "This beats dying under a juniper-tree, don't it?"

COMMUNION.

Communion is fellowship with God. The proper understanding of the word is, what we have in common with another. In the commonly accepted un-

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derstanding of prayer, we speak occasionally to God and ask him for the things we desire. In communion the soul not only comes into occasional touch with the Divine, but is in unbroken, uninterrupted communion or fellowship with him. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Psalm 91:1).

Doctor Kingsbury beautifully says: "What we know of communion with our fellow-men will help to make clear the idea of communion with God. There are those among men with whom we come in contact, with whom we have little especially in common. Our occupations, our tastes, our ambitions do not run along the same lines. On the other hand, there are those with whose tastes, whose pursuits, whose mental and moral characteristics, we are in complete sympathy. With such we have communion because of these many things which we have in common. So when we have a sense of God's presence

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in all that pertains to our spiritual being, when our views of his greatness and goodness and holiness are right, when we realize his claims upon our love and service, then there are things in common between us, and we can, and instinctively do, enter into communion with him. We enjoy the same things which he enjoys. We think his thoughts after him. We are impelled to try to do those things which shall build up his kingdom. We love him with all tenderness. We rejoice in the sense of his friendship.”

It is not enough to get alone with God and then pour out to him our grief and sorrow. We may speak to him and it becomes a blessed joy, but we must know that deeper joy which follows when we abide with him alone in silence. David had learned this secret of great joy in devotion, as we observe the reading of the margin of these verses: “Be *silent* to the Lord, and wait patiently for him” (Psalm 37:7). “Truly my soul is *silent* upon God;

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from him cometh my salvation” (Psalm 62:1). “My soul, be thou *silent* unto God, for my expectation is from him” (Psalm 62:5). The secret of true devotion to, and abiding in Christ is our being able to be quiet with him. Until we have learned the secret of quiet communion with the Father through the Spirit we have not learned the divine art of reading God’s Word or enjoying prayer. “Under a sense of divine nearness, the soul, feeling how self is always ready to assert itself, and intrude even into the holiest of all with its thoughts and efforts, yields itself in a quiet act of self-surrender to the teaching and working of the Divine Spirit. It is still and waits in holy silence, until all is calm and ready to receive the revelation of the divine will and presence. Its reading and prayer then become a waiting on God with ear and heart open and purged to receive fully only what he says.”

Rev. G. Campbell Morgan, D. D., in

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one of his addresses, says: "In every life there ought to be time for the practice of fellowship with God. Here is one peril of the age. Oh, this rushing, restless, feverish age! It is one of the greatest perils that threatens the minister in this day, the peril of having no time for cultivation of fellowship with God. We are swept off our feet by the rush of our work, carried along from day to day, tumbling like a turbid stream, and there is no restfulness, no practice of fellowship, no time for it. Time for everything else, but not for that, and everything is weakened for lack of it. Oh, we need time for quiet, actual communion and fellowship with God."

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“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1).

“Consecration” is a blessed word, but people seem to have an idea that consecration means coming every now and then to give ourselves up to God anew. We cannot consecrate and reconsecrate. The word that helps me most is *abandonment*. It indicates my falling back upon God.—*Geo. H. C. Macgreggor.*

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IV

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“There is a holier, sweeter rest
Than the lulling rest from pain;
A richer calm than that which sleep
Sheds over heart and brain.
It is the soul’s surrendered choice,
The settling of the will,
Lying down calmly at His feet,
His purpose to fulfill.”

MANY who lay claim to a devout life have yielded only their sins to Christ. The thought of living a life absolutely yielded to God, or wholly surrendered to the will of Christ, has never seriously entered their mind. We dare not content ourselves with the thought that all Christ meant to accomplish for us in the gift of himself on the cross was to save our souls from hell. True, he saves us from the *guilt* of sin, but he also offers deliverance from the *power* of sin. He would have us live in loving, loyal obedience to the Holy Spirit

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dwelling within us. We would not dispute with those who ask, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Acts 19:2), and from it teach that the Holy Spirit is only received subsequent to conversion.

Paul most clearly teaches that in the dispensation of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit enters the believer and takes his abode in him at regeneration. Because the apostle found those who had "not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost" (Acts 19:2), he questions at once whether they are Christ's disciples. He at once discovers the trouble. They are John's disciples. As soon as he preaches Christ crucified unto them, they believe, and are baptized and receive the Holy Ghost. The apostle clearly teaches that "if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Romans 8:9). At regeneration the Spirit enters, and it may be possible that some are not as fully conscious of his presence as subsequently, when in the

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light of further revealed truth they are led to a definite act of consecration, when the Spirit takes fuller possession of them.

All have not had the same experience. Many Christians, I dare say, have been conscious of nothing beyond the consciousness of sins forgiven. Others have subsequently, in an act of consecration, been "filled with the Spirit." Others have repeatedly, as more light has been received, yielded themselves more fully to God, and have enjoyed the presence of the Spirit in greater manifestation. The Scriptures clearly teach that the attitude of the devout life toward God should continually be *Spirit-filled*. The command is, "Be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). "God's commands are his enablings." We believe it to be the mind of the Spirit, and the definite teaching of the Word of God, that each regenerate life should be a life absolutely yielded to Jesus Christ, and *kept yielded* ever afterwards. It is true

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that as we grow in the Christian life we discover many things we can no longer consistently do, which before were never questioned. Increased knowledge of the Word of God, and closely following the Spirit's leading, will reveal to us many things not yet surrendered.

Rev. F. B. Meyer puts it this way: "The wife sweeps the room in the early morning and dusts the furniture. Toward the middle of the forenoon she discovers, by the increased light, there is some dust which escaped her notice, so she removes it. Later still, at noon-day, the bright sun shining through the windows reveals more dust which the former dustings did not remove." So in the devotional life. At conversion we give ourselves and all we have to the Lord, the best we know how. Later the Spirit reveals to us something which formerly we never thought to be wrong, and then that is yielded to God. So, whether at conversion or subsequently, we consecrate or surren-

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der ourselves to the Lord, our whole life should be yielded to God. A full appreciation of the Christian life from this view-point will greatly help to correct our mistaken understanding of consecration—"a word that is very common and popular; much more common and popular, it is feared, than the thing itself."

Consecration is one of the greatest words of the Bible, yet I feel it has been greatly abused. Much so, by the so-called monthly consecration meetings of our Young People's societies. When we consecrate ourselves to God we *give* to him. We are then to reckon ourselves as his. Not taking back the gift and using it for a month as our own, and then taking the same gift to the Lord and reconsecrating (?) it. There lies before me on my desk a pocket Testament, the gift of my beloved wife, on the fly-leaf of which she wrote, "The Lord has given you yourself, what will you do with the gift?" That book is mine, she so regards it, and so do I.

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She does not come to me every few days and take that Testament in hand and say, "Here, Edward, I want to give you this Testament." That would be absurd.

The claim of Christ to *all* of the life of every one who would be his child is not unreasonable. He has redeemed us with his own precious blood, and offers to every one a life of rich blessing if we yield ourselves absolutely to him. He knows what is best for us. He knows perfectly the life we should live. Why not let him have full possession and say with Paul, "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20, R. V.).

"Now, Lord, I would be thine alone;
Come, take possession of thine own,
For thou hast set me free;
Released from Satan's hard command,
See all my powers in waiting stand,
To be employed by thee."

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OUR SUBSTANCE.

In the truest sense, man can be the absolute owner of nothing. Of the material wealth of the world he brought nothing with him when he was born, and when the spirit leaves the body he takes nothing with him. "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither" (Job 1:21). See what the Word teaches as to who is the proprietor of all things: Deuteronomy 10:14; Psalm 24:1; I. Chronicles 29:11, 12; Psalm 50:10, 12; Exodus 9:29; Haggai 2:8.

"There is no truly Christian man who keeps an unconverted pocketbook. God's universal law of unselfish service is as supreme in the domain of material possessions—in the realm of that wealth which extends a man's power 'to bring things to pass'—as it is in any other department of man's possible efforts." If we are wholly yielded to the Lord, then all we have is his, and

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we are only his stewards. The truly devout man of God will not simply regard a part of his income as belonging to the Lord, and that he should give liberally of it to his cause, but he will regard the obtaining of it all and the proper spending and retaining portions of it in accordance with the divine will. "When we give ourselves to the Lord Jesus by an everlasting covenant, he admits us into a wonderfully endearing copartnership, a sort of sacred stock company or firm of which the Father and Son are senior partners. Into this copartnership Jesus puts all he is and all he has, and we put in all we have and all we are, the combined stock to be used as the needs of the firm require." Have we such a conception of the yielded life? Lord, help us!

"When I went into the ministry," says Doctor Schauffler, "as soon as I had any money of my own I said, 'O Lord, one-tenth shall be thine'; and I thought I was doing all I ought to do when I said that. I preached that, and

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have practiced that all my life; but, dear me! that is a small thing. One-tenth is what Jacob gave, and are we not better than Jacob? However, I met a consecrated Christian woman once in New York and asked her about this matter of money. She said, 'I used to give one-tenth, but I have got beyond that; and now I ask the Lord, for every dollar that I have, Lord what shall I do with that dollar?' I dropped my tenth like a hot iron that day, and I will never again take it up. 'Again, there is a larger liberty than that of one-tenth, and that is the liberty of all God calls for. Sometimes he will call for a fifth. Give it. Sometimes he will call for a quarter. Give it. Whatever he calls for, give it. The gold and the silver are not mine; they are his. When he who is the owner of it calls for it, give it; don't hold it. Oh, we need a change of view on this matter of money. We need to realize honestly and truly that it is more blessed to give than to receive.'

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"All I have I give to Jesus;
It belongs to him."

OUR BODIES.

The yielded life includes a yielded body. Many Christians have never regarded their bodies as the Lord's. They have been very religious (?) in spirit, but very sinful in body. Hear what the apostle teaches: "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price; glorify God therefore in your body" (I. Corinthians 6:19, 20, R. V.). Before saying this he said, "Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ?" (v. 15, R. V.). "There are two things," says Dr. A. T. Pierson, "which pertain to the ownership of a house: the first is the *purchasing* of it, and the second is the *inhabiting* of it. In this case, the owner is God, and he has paid his price for the house, and then he moves into the house, and claims it as the occupant, so that there

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is no disputing his ownership. The body of the believer is the house of God, for he purchased the believer's body and soul, and then the Holy Ghost moved in and took possession. And you are to think, not of your soul, mind, heart, will, and conscience only, as God's house, but of your *body* as his temple."

The beauty and force of the Scriptures are often marred by the breaks made by the division into chapters. We should never read the last verses of chapter six of II. Corinthians without reading the first verse of chapter seven. "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Here we are taught to cleanse ourselves

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from all *filthiness* of the *flesh*, and yield a clean, pure body unto the Lord. Mr. Moody used to say, "God does not require golden vessels, neither does he seek for silver ones, but he must have *clean* ones."

The temptations of the flesh are numerous and severe, yet if we consider ourselves wholly the Lord's, we yield to him instead of the tempter. The old colored man had the right idea, who, when tempted, always said: "O Lord, I 'se your property, and the debbel is a-prowlin' 'round. Lord, take care ob your own." With all, it is not the easiest thing to keep the flesh in subjection to the spirit. Even Paul recognized that it took some effort. He said, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection" (I. Corinthians 9:27). A Sunday-school teacher was talking about this verse to her class and asked them how Saint Paul kept his body under. One bright little girl answered, "Please, teacher, by keeping the soul on top." If you would keep the body

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yielded to God, or held in subjection to sin, you must keep the soul on top. If you would not fulfill the lusts of the flesh, you must walk in the Spirit. You must live in constant touch with the power which enables you to live the life hid with Christ in God. Rev. Evan H. Hopkins, in one of his Keswick addresses, said: "You cannot say *good-by* to the death of Christ. No, it is because there is that within us to the last which makes it possible for us to go back to the old life, that it is necessary for us to have the power of his death perpetually in the very center of our being. It is this power which sets us free from the old life."

OUR WILLS.

The will is supreme in man. This is the throne, and possibly the most difficult to yield to another. Have you learned to say with David, "I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Psalm 40: 8)? If so, then you know what it is to give up your plans and purposes and

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hopes and merge them all into the plans and purposes of God. Fénelon has rightly said, "Pure religion resides in the *will* alone." Many have unmistakably thought that the life hid with Christ is the one that is lived in the emotions. Thus many people have based their standing in God on their feelings. A careful searching of the Scriptures will reveal the fact that when they speak of the "heart" they do not refer so much to the seat of the *emotions* as the *will*, the throne, the center of the man. "The will," says Hannah Smith, "is the governing power in man's nature; if the will is set right, all the rest of the nature must come into harmony. By the will I do not mean the wish of the man, or even his purpose, but the deliberate choice, the deciding power, the king, to which all that is in the man must yield obedience." In another chapter we have called attention to the devotion of Jesus to the will of the Father. Our wills must be yielded to Christ as his

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was to the Father. "‘Have this mind in you which was in Christ Jesus,’ and then you can do whatever you are a mind to."

The Old Testament is full of striking illustrations of the thought of absolute surrender. In I. Kings 20:1-4, we read, "And Ben-hadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together: and there were thirty and two kings with him, and horses, and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it. And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Ben-hadad, Thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine. And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have." God asks of us an absolute surrender. Can we reply as Ahab did to his superior? Joshua's surrender to the man with the drawn sword is another example for us.

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Doubtless many feel led to yield their wills to God, yet they dread to abandon their wills entirely, for fear that God may make them do something disagreeable. God is not less considerate of his children than an earthly parent is of his own, and what father would conspire to make his child do all the disagreeable things he could think of because the child had promised to do whatever the parent willed? God, in asking that our wills be yielded to him, could have no evil design. If we would but believe we might know he asks it for our good and happiness. Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman illustrates this point with this touching story. He says: "God asks only for our wills, and he is a happy man who reaches the place where he holds back nothing from God. A celebrated bishop of the Church of England had made a complete sacrifice of everything in his life except his affection for his wife. She was an invalid, and he felt that he could not yield her up, she had been so

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long upon his heart. Both husband and wife were passing through the severest spiritual struggle, and one day the good bishop reached the place where he said that he could give up his wife to Christ. With tear-wet cheek he came into her room to tell her that he had gained the victory only to be met with the response that she, too, had crossed the line and had yielded everything to Christ. During the night she died, after her lingering illness; and, strange as it may seem, and yet not strange, when they rapped at the door of the bishop, his heart, too, had ceased to beat, and he, too, stood in the presence of God. God only wanted their wills; and, when they had been yielded to him, he would not allow them to be separated even for a minute of time, and he bound them together for an unending eternity."

A beautiful story is told of two great generals in the American Civil War. During General Sherman's last campaign in the South, certain changes in

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commanders were made. General Howard was placed at the head of a certain division. Soon after this the war closed, and there was to be a grand review of the army at Washington. The night before the review, Sherman sent for Howard and said, "The political friends of the officer you succeeded are determined that he shall ride at the head of the corps, and I want you to help me out."

"It is my command," said Howard, "and I am entitled to ride at its head."

"Of course you are," replied Sherman. "You led the men through Georgia and the Carolinas; but, Howard, you are a Christian, and can stand the disappointment."

"If you put it on that ground," said Howard, "there is but one answer: Let him ride at the head of the corps."

"Yes, let him have the honor," said Sherman, "but you will report to me at nine o'clock and will ride by my side at the head of the army."

Howard protested, but the command-

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er's orders were positive. So, that day, in the grand review, the man who had yielded his rights had a place of higher honor at the head of the whole army.

So will it be with every child of God who will yield absolutely his life to Christ. Let every Christian sincerely say :

“Laid on thine altar, O my Lord divine,
Accept this gift to-day, for Jesus' sake.
I have no jewels to adorn thy shrine,
Nor any world-famed sacrifice to make ;
But here I bring within my trembling hand
This *will* of mine, a thing that seemeth small,
And thou alone, O Lord, canst understand
How, when I yield thee this, I yield my all.

“Take it, O Father, ere my courage fail,
And merge it so in thine own will, that, e'en
If in some desperate hour my cries prevail,
And thou give back my gift, it may have been
So changed, so purified, so fair have grown,
So one with thee, so filled with peace divine,
I may not know or feel it as my own,
But, gaining back my will, may find it thine.”

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“Think not if thou art not called
To work in mission fields
Of some far distant clime,
That thine is no grand mission.
Every deed that comes to thee,
In God’s appointed time,
Is just the greatest deed that thine can be,
Since God’s high will appointed it to thee.”

“No service in itself is small,
Nor great, though earth it fill;
But that is small which seeks its own
And great which seeks God’s will.”

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V

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“So live, so act that every hour
May die as dies the natural flower;
That every word and every deed
May bear within itself the seed
Of future good in future need.”

EVERY devout life should be lived for “the glory of God and the salvation of men.” Our blessed Savior, who lived a life of unvarying devotion to the Father, said, “As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world” (John 17:18). His devotion to the Father consisted in his devotion to the work which the Father sent him to do. Our devotion to Jesus will be measured by our devotion to the work which he has given us to accomplish. In this respect, the Father expected from the Son no greater faithfulness than the Son expects from us. If we earnestly desire to follow the ex-

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ample and teaching of the Master, then we shall be anxious to render faithful service in his name. Let no one be discouraged because he cannot render some great service, for faithfulness does not consist in doing great things. The humble child of God who gives a cup of cold water in his name may be doing just as faithful service as he who preaches a sermon or leads a soul to Christ. Some one has said that between the great things we cannot do and the little things we will not do, the likelihood is that we shall not do anything.

The faithful child of God, who is seeking light from the Scriptures as to the devotional life, cannot help but realize that in order to maintain a truly devotional spirit he must give himself to service. We dare not open our natures Godward and then keep them closed manward. We cannot truly stretch out our one hand toward God if we do not stretch out the other toward our fellow-man. If we want to

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fully enjoy that which we receive from God, and be enriched by it, we must pass it on to others for their enjoyment and the enriching of their lives. Our attention has been called to the same thought when we think of the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. The beautiful Sea of Galilee, nestling among the hills, is attractive and filled with, and surrounded by life, because it has a hand with which it pours out the Jordan for the enriching of the country below, as well as a hand with which it receives the Jordan from above. How different the Dead Sea! No life in it. No life about it. Why? Because it has a hand with which it receives the Jordan, but no hand to give it out. Did not Jesus teach that he who would save his life must be willing to lose it? "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 10: 39).

We may ask, What is service? In a word it has been answered: "It is putting Christianity to work. It is 'doing

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good' to our fellow-man in our Redeemer's name and for his sake." In his "Studies for Personal Workers," Howard Agnew Johnston says: "The man who takes Christ for his Savior must also take Christ for his Master, to make Christ's purpose his purpose. But Christ's purpose is to serve. It was the law of his life on earth, and continues to be in heaven. He 'came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45). Every man redeemed by Christ from the slavery of sin belongs in very truth to Christ. His one aim should be to do all in his power toward paying the great debt he owes to Christ. But this means to serve Christ in Christ's way, and he has made that way plain. We serve him by denying self, as he did, and by seeking to save others, as he did. But with the true Christian this is not done simply from a sense of obligation. He has caught a vision of Christ's wonderful love, which explains Calvary, and

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he has learned to love the Christ-life above every other. Hence for him salvation does not simply mean service, for life meant some kind of service before. Salvation now means the loving service of Christ."

How many there are who have wrong conceptions of religious duty. They think that serving God consists in going to church once or twice on the Sabbath day and giving an occasional sum to religious purposes. Is this service? Is this all for which God gives the Holy Spirit? This, man can do without the Spirit. The Spirit is given to enable him to do the otherwise impossible. This is the service to which the Master calls; can we afford to be satisfied with less?

Many have excused themselves from definite service in the opinion that it was to be done by those to whom was imparted special gifts. "And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the per-

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fecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11, 12, R. V.). True, he has chosen some to be apostles and prophets and evangelists and pastors and teachers, not to do all the work of serving or ministering, but to teach or perfect the saints for the work of ministering. Therefore every saint—for every child of God is so recognized in the Scriptures—is to be a servant, ministering to others in the building up of the body of Christ, the church.

Our Master, whom we serve, has said: "Ye are the light of the world. . . . Even so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16, R. V.). God has wonderfully exalted our service, in that he has dignified our good works. Not only are they to be a joy and blessing to our lives, but, seen by others, they shall be the instrument leading to their conver-

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sion and their glorifying our Father in heaven. Every child of God should see the tremendous importance Christ has attached to our light-shining service. "As needful as that the sun shine every day, yea, more so, is it that every believer let his light shine before men. For this we have been created anew in Christ, to hold forth the Word of Life, as lights in the world. Christ needs you to let his light shine through you. Perishing men around you need your light, if they are to find their way to God. God needs you to let his glory be seen through you. As wholly as a lamp is given up to lighting a room, every believer ought to give himself up to be the light of a dark world."

Dear reader, have you ever read the Scriptures carefully with a view of ascertaining the true mission of your life? It is not merely to enjoy the blessings of religion or preparing to reach heaven; these are secondary. The primary mission, that for which we have been created in Christ Jesus,

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is *service*. "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2: 10, R. V.). God has a plan for the life of every one of his children. He has prepared the plan. He has prepared the works, and he also has created the worker for carrying on his work. Dare any child deny him the service which he justly claims at his hand?

We are taught by the apostle Paul that our service for the Lord is to be *abounding*. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I. Corinthians 15: 58). God is not satisfied with spasmodic or occasional service. Sometimes we find those whose service partakes of this nature. They appear wonderfully active during a revival season, but as soon as the revival is over they sink back into inactivity. Some one likens them to bits of paper

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along a railroad track which are picked up and carried along for a short while by the air put in motion by a passing train, but after a while settle down to the same quietness which characterized them before the train put them in motion, waiting for another passing train. Paul says, we are always to abound in the work of the Lord. What shall this work be? Read the preceding verses of the chapter. It is telling to others of the risen Lord and proving the same by living before them the resurrected life.

Our Heavenly Father is not satisfied with half-hearted service. We are to be enthusiastic—*God in us*. He wants a people full of zeal in service. “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works” (Titus 2: 14, R. V.). A proper appreciation of our redemption and purification should set us on fire for God. If we would be zealous in our Master’s serv-

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ice, three things must inspire us: First, a realization of the urgent and vast need of service; second, we must take great delight in it; and, third, the love of Christ must constrain us. The child of God who is constrained by the love of Christ, and sees the vast need of the world, and then takes great delight in doing his part will not need to be urged to greater zeal in the Master's cause. Then service will be a pleasure.

In closing this chapter on the doctrine of the devotion of service, let me call attention to two great phases of service—that of personal work and Christian missions.

Men may talk all they please of social righteousness and great social reforms, yet social righteousness can only be brought about by personal righteousness. Only to the extent that the hearts of individuals are regenerated will society be improved. Christ dealt not with the masses and great reform movements, but with individuals. Our witnessing for Christ must

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be a personal witness. "Scripture is full of examples of those who told to others what the Lord had done for them, and who thus became a blessing to them." Parents, the blessing of winning your children to Christ should be yours; do not transfer it to some one else. Backed by your godly life it should be the easiest thing in the world to speak the loving personal word that should win the heart of your child to your Lord and Master.

Do not men in their intercourse with men often speak about every subject except that of their soul's salvation? "Some years ago, a well-known Christian was stopped on the street by a friend with the question, 'Mr. R., how long have we known each other?' 'About fifteen years,' was the reply. 'You claim to be a Christian.' 'Yes.' 'Well, do you believe I must accept Jesus Christ if I am saved?' 'I do.' 'And do you care whether or not I am saved?' 'Why, certainly!' 'Pardon me, I do not wish to hurt you, but I

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do not believe it. Through these years we have discussed all sorts of topics, yet you have never uttered one word to indicate to me that you cared about my soul. If you had cared, you surely would have spoken.' ”

Perhaps some one who will read these pages will desire to lead a life of devoted service to the Master, especially in the work of personally leading souls to him. To such we most heartily recommend several little books which have greatly blessed the writer: “Individual Work for Individuals,” Trumbull; “Studies for Personal Workers,” Johnston; “Personal Work,” Sayford; “How to Bring Men to Christ,” Torrey.

Every devoted follower of Jesus Christ is a friend and promoter of Christian missions. He cannot be otherwise, since his Master gave as his parting command, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). The work of Christian missions should be the principal aim of the church on earth.

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To the church, composed of individual Christians, has been committed the gospel—good news. We are under obligation both to God and the heathen world to faithfully discharge the trust committed to us. If a person had left to his executor a large sum of money to be transferred to his children, and he were as recreant to the trust as the church has been to the heathen, he would be dealt with by the law.

We rejoice to note that there is bright promise of more devotion to the will of the Master in missionary service. This is being manifested to-day in what is known as "living-link churches." Churches are adopting the method of supporting their own missionary. The reflex influence of such undertaking is felt in great blessing by the church at home. In the Presbyterian Church nearly four-fifths of their missionaries are supported either by local churches, societies, or individuals. Robert E. Speer, a secretary of their Missionary Board, says: "The support

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of a missionary by a church has proven, we think, on each side to be a great advantage. The church gives a great deal more, and the missionary has the sense of a prayerful and affectionate interest which otherwise he might lack.”

An increasing number of the churches in the United Brethren denomination are supporting their own missionary, independently of the general cause of missions. Rev. W. M. Bell, D. D., the general Missionary Secretary, says, “Many congregations are already rejoicing in the larger life that has come to them since specific missionary work has been undertaken.”

Let every devoted servant of the Master hear the last published words of Dr. A. J. Gordon: “If we could only come to this, that each church would take up missionary work directly, making the board its commission house for the transaction of its business, its banking house for the transmitting of funds, and its Bible and publishing house for supplying literature, who

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doubts that we might do vastly more than we are now doing? Let us be afraid of lost missionary opportunities. The church which is not a missionary church will be a missing church during the next fifty years. As ministers and churches of Jesus Christ, our self-preservation is conditioned on our obedience to the great commission. Now it is preach or perish, evangelize or fossilize. Be a saving church with girded loins and burning lamp, carrying a lost world on the heart day and night, or be a secularized church, lying on the heart of this present evil world, and allow it to gird you and carry you whithersoever it will. Which shall it be?"

The
Blessed Hope; or, Devo-
tion to Our Coming Lord

“They tell me a solemn story,
But it is not sad to me,
For in its sweet enfoldings
The Savior’s love I see;
They say that at any moment
Upon mine ear may fall
The summons to leave our homestead,
To answer the Master’s call.

“They say I may have no warning;
I may not even hear
The rustling of his garments
As he softly draweth near;
Suddenly, and in a moment,
The Lord of life may come
To lift me up from this cloud-land
Into the light of home.”

VI

The Blessed Hope; or, Devotion to Our Coming Lord

“Oh, the long, long night is passing,
And there cometh the golden day;
I come to my own who love me,
To take them all away.”

ONE of the most precious doctrines in the Word of God, one which if properly understood would be the greatest incentive to devotion, has been greatly neglected because unscrupulous teachers have brought it into disrepute by fixing dates for our Lord's return. In any attempt at fixing definite dates, we are prying into the secret things which belong to God alone. Jesus expressly said, “But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father” (Mark 13:32, R. V.).

That he shall come, no sincere stu-

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dent of the Word can question. When he ascended from Olivet's brow, two heavenly messengers said to his disciples, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven" (Acts 1:11, R. V.). But can we believe these messengers? Let us see. It was an angel that announced to Zacharias while he burned incense in the temple, that his wife Elizabeth should bear a son. (Luke 1:5-13.) It was an angel that made known unto Mary that she should bear a child and that his name should be called Jesus. (Luke 1:26-35.) It was an angel that announced to the shepherds on the hills of Bethlehem, that there was born in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:8-16.) Two angels spoke to Mary Magdalene that first Easter morning at the empty sepulcher and said, He is not here, for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the

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place where the Lord lay. (Matthew 28: 1-6.)

If the angels who spoke to Zacharias and Mary and the shepherds and Mary Magdalene spoke the truth, dare we doubt the heavenly messengers who spoke to the disciples on the Mount of Olives? Neither dare we doubt the words of Jesus himself (John 14: 1-3); nor the apostles.

There are three great *comings* foretold in the Word of God: First, Christ as the Savior of mankind; second, the descent of the Holy Spirit; and third, the return of our Lord. Two of these have already been fulfilled. What reasonable interpretation of Scripture will tolerate our saying that two of these shall be literally fulfilled, and the other, because it has not yet come to pass, must therefore be spiritual? There are only two hundred and sixty chapters in the New Testament, and the return of our Lord is mentioned, either directly or indirectly, three hundred times. The church to-day makes

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much over the subject of baptism, and yet Paul, in his epistles, mentions it thirteen times and speaks of our Lord's coming over fifty times.

The greatest fact in history is that Christ was on earth; the greatest fact of the present is that Christ is in heaven interceding at the right hand of the Father; the greatest event of the future will be Christ's second coming. Consider Christ's three appearings as mentioned in the closing part of the ninth chapter of Hebrews, "but now once in the end of the age hath he *appeared* to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, . . . but into heaven itself, now to *appear* in the presence of God for us." "And unto them that look for him shall he *appear* the second time without sin unto salvation."

When we meet at the table of the Lord to partake of the elements of Christ's broken body and shed blood we are instructed to look both *back-*

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ward to the cross and *forward* to his coming. (I. Corinthians 11:25, 26.) The church to-day needs to look more to Christ's coming, but not less to the cross. We should never get away from Calvary, save as the building grows from the foundation—"never resting as heavily upon it as when farthest from it." In an address delivered at Northfield, Robert E. Speer said: "I believe we need the hope of Christ's coming to fortify our faith in the supernatural, which cannot be kept alive by any belief in supernatural occurrences eighteen hundred years ago. We need it to vivify and keep quick and active our present Christian faith. It is so easy for Christian faith to die away into what is purely mental, what is mechanical, what is external. Men love to have to do with a Christ of ancient history, and they do not like to have to do with a Christ of present life and a Christ of coming judgment. People would rather have Christ wandering up and down through Palestine eigh-

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teen centuries past than testing their present-day lives by the standard of his own, or standing over them as the judge already waiting at the door. The element of expectation is essential to life. We cannot retain pure and fresh and quick our faith in the Christ who died and rose again unless we believe also in the Christ who is reigning now and who is again to come."

Again and again the Scriptures refer to our Lord's coming as a *blessed hope*. "Faith looks upward, hope looks onward." Oftentimes the soul is in the throes of despair, and it is some blessed hope that gives courage and deliverance. More than fifty times when hope is referred to in the Divine Word it has distinct relation to blessings of the future which are to crown the believer at the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ.

We might consider a few of these with great encouragement and inspiration to the devotional life:

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A BLESSED HOPE.

Paul, writing to Titus, calls attention to the epiphany of grace, and after giving rules for holy living calls attention to the epiphany of glory. (Titus 2:11-13.) We miss one of the best parts of this scripture if we stop at the end of verse twelve, as we fear many do. "We are not only taught to live *righteously*, but to live *looking*." This blessed hope refers to a happy inward enjoyment entirely apart from external environment. To the believer who has such an unfailling, joyful anticipation within, the outward circumstances of trial are regarded as "not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to usward. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God" (Romans 8:18, 19, R. V.).

A COMFORTING HOPE.

The ruthlessly severing of earthly ties by the hand of death has often plunged many a believing child of God

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into great sorrow. The thought of a long separation from those we love has caused the cup of many a life to overflow with grief.

“The blight of hope and happiness
Is felt when fond ones part,
And the bitter tear that flows is
The life-blood of the heart.”

To such this hope comes with cheer and comfort. Sorrowing ones, read and reread the apostle's words written to those who were akin to you in grief. (I. Thessalonians 4: 13-17.) That they might mutually cheer each other, he adds this verse, “Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (I. Thessalonians 4: 18). Sorrowing one, in Christ, has thy darling babe been kissed out of thy sight, leaving your heart empty and sad? Or is it a mother, whose ever-gentle touch and loving words are so greatly missed? Or is it a companion, whose life was knit with yours,

And rather than say good-by
You would yourself have died.

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Look up, sad one, for perhaps this shall be the day when he shall come and those "you 've lost awhile," you soon shall meet.

A GLORIOUS HOPE.

Our bodies of humiliation and suffering at His coming are to be made conformable unto the body of his glory. "For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself" (Philippians 3:20, 21, R. V.). Suddenly this mortal, now groaning in the flesh, shall put on immortality. Paul says, "We shall not all sleep [die], but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, . . . and we shall be changed" (I. Corinthians 15:51, 52). To the afflicted, bedridden saint this is a *glorious hope*.

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A PURIFYING HOPE.

There is no greater incentive to a truly devout life in all the realm of sacred teaching than the hope of Christ's coming.

It is an incentive to purity of life. (I. John 3:1-3.) Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Only the pure in heart can see him. You might take a deaf man to a great oratorio and he would not hear a sound; you might stand a blind man with his face toward a glorious sunset and he would not see a ray of light. So an unregenerate or impure man cannot see God. The soul that is lifted up with the hope of seeing his Lord will strive, by the power of the Spirit, to purify himself as he is pure. He will reason thus: The pure and holy and just One is coming, for which I am hoping, for I have set this hope on him. I want to see him; I want to be like him; therefore I must be pure as he is pure.

It is an incentive to righteousness.

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(Titus 2:11-13.) In verse twelve we are taught to live righteously because of the grace offered in Jesus Christ, and because of the blessed hope—his glorious appearing. Jesus, by his death, would bring salvation to all men. We have partaken of his grace, thus enabling us to live the life in which we deny ourselves all ungodliness and worldly lusts, living soberly, righteously, godly. The power which enables such a life is the power of grace; the incentive to such a life is hope. Between these two we are taught how to live in this present world. This life in relation to ourselves is to be *sober*—not overcome with wine or pleasure or prosperity; in relation to others it is to be *righteous*—not oppressing, not defrauding, helping; in relation to God it is to be *godly*—devout, reverential, obedient. My Lord has died to enable and teach me thus to live. He is coming and will see how faithful I am; therefore I cannot be satisfied at any moment with anything

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short of what he rightly and justly expects.

It is an incentive to a life of watchfulness. (II. Peter 3:10-12.) Because we do not know when the thief may come, we watch, we are ready. But His coming is not an event to be dreaded as the breaking in of a thief, but as to the uncertainty of time. Because of this the apostle asks what manner of persons ought we to be in holy living and godliness. We are taught here as elsewhere, repeatedly, to be on the lookout—"looking" for His coming. But to the apostle this would not seem sufficient, for he further says we should "earnestly desire"—the margin says, hastening the coming of the day of the Lord.

It is an incentive to readiness. (I. John 2:28.) When He comes in the bright light of his glory and purity, we shall want to stand in his presence in that boldness which always characterizes the faithful and pure, who are ready at any time to have the search-

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light turned on them. Those who are not ready and are found in all manner of wickedness, though they have been numbered with our churches, shall be ashamed before his presence. In the margin we read, "Ashamed from his presence."

It is an incentive to increased religious activity. It is amazing how a due attention given to this doctrine has increased the religious activity of those who seek to do the will of God. Nearly all of the evangelists of any note have been greatly enthused with this blessed hope, and under the inspiration it has given them, thousands have been gathered to the bride of Christ. The same glorious truth has put a hitherto unknown earnestness and zeal into many pastors and local churches. No one can read "How Christ Came to Church," by Dr. A. J. Gordon, without recognizing the marvelous impetus given to the activities of a local church when its pastor put himself and his church in the attitude of

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looking for their Lord's return. Those who have gone to the mission-fields under the inspiration of this uplifting hope have toiled and labored with a courage and an inspiration which has simply worked wonders.

“ . . . Unto you is given
To watch for the coming of His feet
Who is the glory of our blessed heaven.
The work and watching will be very sweet,
Even in an earthly home,
And in such an hour as you think not
He will come.”

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